A meeting of the Council was held in Room 201, The Carrington Building, on Monday 25 March 2013 at 2.15pm.

Present:
The President
The Vice-Presidents (Mrs J M Scott and Mr R Dwyer)
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor G Brooks)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor S J Mithen)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor C M Williams)

Mr N Cook
Mrs J E Coope
Dr B Cosh
Professor R H Ellis
Dr P Erskine
Mr R E R Evans
Professor S Hawker
Professor G Marston
Mr H W A Palmer

Dr P R Preston
Mr S P Sherman
Mr I P Smith
Ms K Swift
Sir John Sunderland
Professor G H Tucker
Mrs S L Webber
Ms S M Woodman

The University Secretary

In attendance:
The Chief Operating Officer
The Head of University Administration
The Director of Finance

Apologies were received from Mr T Bartlam, Professor J Board, Mrs B Edwards, Mr J Fletcher, Dr I Mueller-Harvey and Dr A P Reed. The President referred to the Yearly Meeting of the University Court which had taken place earlier in the day and thanked all those who had contributed to so successful an event.

The President reported the deaths of:

**Emeritus Professor Peter Hart**, who had served as Professor of Economics from 1967 until his retirement in 1983.

**Dr Alexandra Henein** who had been a Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice at the time of her death.

**Mr Ian Maclean**, the University’s Chief Photographer who had retired in 1998 after forty-seven years’ service.
Emeritus Professor Charles Miles, CBE, Professor of Land Management, who had served as Dean of the Faculty of Urban and Regional Studies prior to his retirement in 1981.

*13/20 The minutes (13/01-13/18) of the meeting held on 28 January 2013 were confirmed and signed.

Arising on the Minutes:

Minute 13/16: Charter and Statutes

It was reported that, at a meeting held on 12 February 2013, Her Majesty the Queen had allowed amendments to the Charter and the Privy Council had allowed amendments to the Statutes as proposed.

Items of Report

13/21 Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee (Item 2(a))

* The Council received the report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 4 March 2013 relating to items for report.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 4 March 2013 relating to items for report be received.”

13/22 Documents sealed and to be sealed (Item 2(b))

* The Council received a list of documents sealed and to be sealed.

Resolved:

“That the Council approve the action taken by the Officers and Members in affixing the University Seal to documents sealed since the last Ordinary Meeting of the Council and authorise the Seal of the University to be affixed to the documents to be sealed as now reported.”

Items for Discussion and Decision

13/23 Report of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 3)

In his report, the Vice-Chancellor made reference to:

(a) the award to the University of a Regius Professorship in Meteorology and Climate Science, a notable mark of distinction and esteem and one of only twelve granted to UK universities in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee;
the recent groundbreaking ceremony for the University of Reading Malaysia and, for a modest outlay, the imminent opening of an office in Beijing, both of which were intended to sustain and advance the University’s standing internationally;

c) the effort that was being deployed by colleagues throughout the University to convert undergraduate and postgraduate applications into firm acceptances in the face of the twin imperatives of meeting the reduced Student Number Control that had been set by HEFCE and of attracting as many entrants as possible with A Level grades of ABB+. In response to a question from Mr Evans, the Head of University Administration explained that it was as yet too early in the cycle to draw conclusions from the behaviour of applicants in relation to the offers they were holding;

d) preparations for the Research Excellence Framework which were proceeding apace and the success of the Academic Investment Project which had attracted some fifty-three new colleagues to Reading from institutions in the UK and overseas;

e) the importance of achieving a good return rate in the National Student Survey, an endeavour in which the University was working in concert with the Students’ Union. The outcomes of the survey were a key determinant in securing the University’s position in certain league tables and comments made in earlier years had catalysed improvements to the student experience such increased Library opening hours and the creation of more dedicated study space beyond that which had traditionally been available only in the Library;

f) the advent of Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOCS), which the Vice-Chancellor saw as an exciting opportunity to reach previously untapped markets and, in so doing, to raise the University’s profile. Reading had aligned itself to the Futurelearn platform led by the Open University and, in response to a question from Dr Preston, the Vice-Chancellor explained that the benefits of involvement were not expected to extend to providing a new revenue stream for the University;

g) the recent cancellation of two speaker events advertised by the Muslim Society as part of its Islam Awareness Week. The University had a responsibility to balance freedom of speech and the right to peaceful protest against danger to persons and to premises and had concluded, in partnership with the Students’ Union and the Muslim Society that, on this occasion, the risk of disturbance was simply too great. Mindful of the obligations laid upon it in law, the University was devising a series of protocols that might be deployed in any future such circumstance but, in so doing, was conscious that each instance would inevitably demand a tailored approach. Further consideration would be given to this matter at the next meeting of Council.

In response to a question from Mrs Scott, the Vice-Chancellor commented that the University’s withdrawal from the 1994 Group had had little discernible impact on its ability to communicate with Government and to influence
policy. By way of example, he cited a recent approach which had resulted in a dilution of the proposed monopoly of the Russell Group over determining the content of A Levels. Noting that eight universities in total had left the 1994 Group, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor commented that the continued relevance and vitality of all mission groups was being called into question in certain quarters.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the Vice-Chancellor, now submitted, be approved.”

13/24 Reports of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 4 March 2013 relating to items for discussion and decision (Item 4)

* The Council received reports from the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 28 January 2013 relating to items for discussion and decision.

In regard to item 4(a), the Financial Report, January 2013, the Director of Finance explained that, following the half-year re-forecasting exercise, the budgeted operating deficit for Academic Group in the year ending 31 July 2013 remained at £9.3m. REDACTED S43

In regard to item 4(b), the Report of the Health and Safety Committee, Mr Dwyer commented that the Council was now beginning to see the effects of a robust system of health and safety auditing that had been introduced some years earlier and, whilst continual vigilance must clearly be maintained, could take comfort accordingly.

In regard to item 4(c), Analysis of Research Grants and Contracts: FQ1 and 2, 2012-13, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Williams) noted a fall in income relative to the same point in 2012 but suggested that this was most likely to be the product of timing and, in particular, a mismatch between the University’s accounting year and that of the Research Councils. The dominant trend would become more apparent as the year progressed.

In regard to item 4(d), Major Capital Projects, the Chief Operating Officer explained in respect of the ‘amber’ notation that pressure continued to bear on the programme for the EduCity campus in Malaysia but that some progress had recently been made.

In regard to item 4(e), Endowment Funds, the Chief Operating Officer explained that, in consequence of advice provided to the University by the Charity Commission which had subsequently proved to be incorrect, the Council was now being asked to approve a resolution in substitution for that approved on 9 July 2012 in respect of ‘larger’ prize funds. This had the effect
of allowing the University to consolidate more funds and thus to put the proceeds to better use.

Resolved:

“That:

(a) the Financial Report: January 2013, now submitted, be received;

(b) the Report of the Health and Safety Committee, now submitted, be received;

(c) the Analysis of Research Grants and Contracts: FQ1 and 2, 2012-13, now submitted, be received;

(d) the Report on Major Capital Projects, now submitted, be received;

(e) in exercise of the powers conferred by section 74C of the Charities Act 1993, and being satisfied on behalf of the University as Trustee of the twenty-three endowment and prize funds listed on the attached schedule that it is in the University’s best interests, the twenty-three funds listed in that schedule be changed with effect from 25 March 2013 as set out in the schedule in order to apply the resources of the funds in a more effective way while maintaining the original character of the said funds.”

13/25 Presentation on the University’s land and property portfolio

At the invitation of the President, the Chief Operating Officer (Mr D C L Savage) made a presentation to the Council on the University’s land and property portfolio and circulated maps of landholdings in the Reading area and at Shinfield, Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross (copies inserted in Minute Book).

Mr Savage explained that the University had recently vacated the sites formerly occupied by Bulmershe Court (save for the playing fields), Wells Hall and Sibly Hall and, in accordance with its usual practice, intended to sell these on for development with planning permission which had duly been granted in respect of all three. Beyond Reading, and as the result of work that had taken some twenty years to reach fruition, planning permission had been secured in respect of major sites at Shinfield West and The Manor while that in respect of land at Cutbush Lane was awaited. These sites were within the area identified by Wokingham Borough Council for strategic development and the University had recently operated in concert with the authority to secure, on advantageous terms, a loan of £25m from the Homes and Communities Agency to fund the building of the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road upon which realisation of the full development potential of the sites relied.

The University was taking specialist advice as to the optimal means of securing best value from all these disposals but intended to retain a significant
parcel of land in Shinfield for the construction of a Science and Innovation Park. The Vice-Chancellor explained that the University did not envisage putting such facility to use for its own operational purposes but intended instead to create a distinctive proposition that would appeal to enterprises from within the area and beyond. The Council could expect to hear more of this in the year ahead.

As Chairman of the Investments Committee, Mr Evans commended the management of the University and its advisers for their skilful handling of these matters but, in so doing, reminded the Council that underlying financial strength as represented by land and property holdings must not delay the imperative of returning the Academic Group to operating surplus.

13/26 Effectiveness of the Council (Item 5)

* The Council received a Report on the Effectiveness of Council prepared by Mr Palmer and the University Secretary.

Mr Palmer explained that the Report recorded the views of the principal committees of the Council and of certain other committees which, broadly speaking and with occasional modification, had pronounced themselves comfortable with the proposals put forward by the review body. An exception was the Students’ Union Liaison Committee, misgivings expressed by which remained to be reconciled with the view accepted by the Support Services Policy Committee that merger would better serve effective governance.

The Council had asked at its meeting on 28 January 2013 that a series of recommendations derived from the Report of the review body, refined appropriately in light of subsequent consultation, be formulated for transmission to the Council through the Strategy and Finance Committee in the Summer Term 2013. Mr Palmer undertook so to do, bearing in mind the overriding wish of the Council to be maximally enabled, through induction and continuous development, through the presentation of papers and through the structure and style of meetings, constructively to challenge proposals emanating from University management.

Resolved:

“That, a report on the Effectiveness of Council, now submitted, be received.”

13/27 Report of the Appointments Committee (Item 6)

* The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Appointments Committee held on 11 February 2013.

Resolved:

That:

“1. Ms S.M. Woodman be appointed a Vice-President of the Council (vice Mrs J.M. Scott) to serve for the period from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014;
“2. Dr P.E. Erskine and Mr S.P. Sherman each be re-appointed to membership of the Council in Class 2 to serve for the period from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2016;

“3. Ms S.M. Woodman be appointed to the Campaign Strategy Group for the period to 31 July 2014; and that Mrs S.L. Webber be appointed to the Campaign Strategy Group for the period to 31 July 2015.”

“4. the Report of the meeting of the Appointments Committee held on 11 February 2013, now submitted, be approved.”

13/28 Report of the Audit Committee (Item 7)

* The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 21 February 2013.

Resolved:

“1. That, with reference to item 2, there be one addition to the terms of reference of the Audit Committee as follows:

“11(o) To review letter(s) of representation requested by the external auditors in relation to the financial statements”

“2. That, with reference to item 3, the appointment of KPMG as external auditors to the University be confirmed for the financial year ending 31 July 2013 and that their remuneration be settled with the Chairman of the Audit Committee.”

“3. That the Report of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 21 February 2013, now submitted, be approved.”

13/29 Report of the Senate (Item 8)

* The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 13 March 2013.

Resolved:

“1. That, with reference to item 1, under the provisions of Ordinance XXIV the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on Professor R.B. Potter with effect from 1 February 2013;”

“2. That, with reference to item 2, the following members of the Academic Staff who are retiring early, each be accorded the title of Honorary Fellow for a period of five years with effect from the date indicated:

Mrs G. Hassell (1 March 2013)
Mr H. Jarvis (16 February 2013)
Mr D. Keeley (1 January 2013)
Ms A.C. Quinn (1 January 2013)”
“3. That, with reference to item 3, the following be accorded the title of Visiting Professor:

(a) School of Humanities
Professor H.-J. Glock (University of Zurich), for a further period to 30 April 2016.

(b) Henley Business School
Mr A. Grower (Magrath LLP), for the period to 31 December 2015.
Professor P. Samouel (Kingston University), for the period to 31 December 2015.
Professor D. West (King’s College London), for the period to 31 December 2015.
Mr N. Woodcock (The Customer Framework), for the period to 31 December 2015.

(c) School of Politics, Economics and International Relations
Professor N. Jackson (Office of UK National Statistics), for the period to 31 December 2015.

(d) School of Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy
Professor F.H. Kohnke (University of Messina), for a further period to 31 March 2016.
Professor A. Naylor (consultant), for a further period to 30 April 2016.
Professor C. Nicklin (Diamond Light Source), for a further period to 31 March 2016.
Professor A.M. Palmer (Ms Therapeutics), for the period to 31 March 2016.
Professor G. Siligardi (UK National Synchrotron Facility), for a further period to 30 April 2016.

(e) School of Systems Engineering
Professor E. Stansfield (Racal Research Ltd), for a further period to 31 December 2015.

“4. That the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 13 March 2013, now submitted, be approved.”
The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Support Services Policy Committee held on 25 January 2013.

As Chairman of the Committee, Mr Dwyer explained that the meeting had taken as its theme Catering and Residences and next intended to turn its attention to Safety and Security. The Vice-President (Academic Affairs) of the Students’ Union noted that students had relayed their concern at the closure of Café Libro throughout the Easter Vacation to the last meeting of the Catering and Hospitality Committee and intended to return to the matter at the next.

The Vice Chancellor reported that he had visited a number of Halls of Residence in the past months and had been reassured by the apparently seamless transition from management by University to that of UPP. Stressing the importance of the arts to the life of the University, he informed the Council of an intention to cluster and augment events within the month of June so as to maximise their impact.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the meeting of the Support Services Policy Committee held on 25 January 2013, now submitted, be approved.”

Establishment of a Grievance Committee

The President reported that the Vice-Chancellor had referred a grievance raised by a member of the Academic Staff, to a Grievance Committee in accordance with Statute XXXIII (34); and it was proposed that Professor S Hawker (Chair), Mrs J E Coope (a member of the Council not being a person employed by the University) and Professor S J Graham (a member of the Academic Staff nominated by the Senate) be appointed to membership thereof.

Resolved:

“That the establishment of a Grievance Committee comprising Professor S Hawker (Chair), Mrs J E Coope (a member of the Council not being a person employed by the University) and Professor S J Graham (a member of the Academic Staff nominated by the Senate) be approved.”

Date of the final meeting of the Council in the Session 2012-13

Monday 8 July 2013 at 2.15pm.

Provisional dates for meetings of the Council in the Session 2013-14

Monday 25 November 2013 at 2.15pm
Friday 24 January 2014 at 2.15pm
Monday 24 March 2014 at 2.15pm preceded by a meeting of the Court in the morning
Monday 14 July 2014 at 2.15pm.